

The Story of Ruby Bridges

by Robert Coles

This script takes place during two different time periods (when Ruby Bridges is young and when Ruby Bridges is an adult) with narrators telling the story and the characters playing out the roles.

Characters:

Ruby Bridges (Adult Ruby)

Young Ruby Bridges (Young Ruby)

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Ruby's mom

Little girl, little boy

Protestor 1

Protestor 2

Mrs. Henry

Stage Director- all scene descriptions written in parentheses

Narrator 1:

It was years ago in a small town in Mississippi called Tylertown when a little girl named Ruby Bridges was born.

Narrator 2:

Her family was very poor and they had to work really hard to survive.

Adult Ruby (*talking with her mother and a little girl/boy*):

My life has been really hard. We had to do everything to support our family. I went to bed some nights hungry because we did not have enough to eat. When my dad lost his job, things got worse and we ended up moving.

Little girl, Little boy:

Where did you move to, Ruby?

Adult Ruby:

We moved to New Orleans and then both of my parents got jobs.

Ruby's mom:

I got a job cleaning floors and Ruby's dad also had a cleaning job.
Things were definitely tough.

Little girl, Little boy:

Did you like school when you were little? *(Said with excitement)*
We love it!

Adult Ruby:

It was really bad at first.

Narrator 1:

The white children and the African American children were not allowed to go to the same school.

Narrator 2:

The worst part is that the two groups of people did not get to have the same education. Schools for African American children had fewer teachers, did not have many good books or supplies, and were not maintained very well.

Adult Ruby:

But when I was in elementary school, the laws changed, and I was allowed to go to a white school, William Franz Elementary School. I was only six years old.

Ruby's mom:

We were so proud of her and happy because this was such an important event for African American people.

Little girl, Little boy *(talking to Ruby's mom)*:

Were you scared?

Ruby's mom:

Yes, her father and I were, but we did a lot of praying, and we knew that she would be okay.

Little girl, Little boy:

What was so bad about it, Ruby?

Ruby:

When I first started at the white school, people were not very happy.

Little girl, Little boy:

What happened?

(Ruby starts to think back and remembers about what happened)

(This next part takes place back when Ruby was in school.)

(Young Ruby is walking into school and passing the protestors.)

Protestor 1 (carrying a sign):

We don't want our white children going to school with a black girl!

Protestor 2 (carrying a sign):

Go away! You don't belong here!

Narrator 1:

As Ruby walked into school, she always had people screaming and shouting at her. She never said anything to the crowd. She just held her head up high and walked right past them.

Narrator 2:

She would be driven to school, then the marshals walked into the building with her. They were sent there by the president to protect her from the angry mob.

Narrator 1:

When Ruby got into school, she was the only one in there other than Mrs. Henry, her new teacher. She was learning in school all by herself. She didn't have anyone to play with at recess or eat with at lunch.

Mrs. Henry:

How are you doing, Ruby? Are you afraid?

Young Ruby (*with a happy face*):

No, I am doing fine, Mrs. Henry! I am ready to learn!

Narrator 1:

Mrs. Henry was very nervous for Ruby and wondered how much longer she would want to stay in this school.

(Scene switches back to old Ruby)

Adult Ruby:

A couple days later when I was walking to school, I stopped near the crowd. People started yelling loudly at me.

Many people were nervous for me, especially Mrs. Henry.

(Scene switches back to young Ruby)

Protestors (*chanting*):

Go away! You don't belong here! Go away!

(Young Ruby walks into school and is greeted by Mrs. Henry)

Mrs. Henry:

What were you doing out there Ruby? I was so scared for you. It looked like you were talking to them.

Young Ruby:

I wasn't talking. I was praying.

Mrs. Henry:

Praying?

Young Ruby:

Yes. I usually stopped earlier, but I forgot today.

I was just praying for them. I know that they are saying these bad things about me, but they don't really mean it. I want God to forgive them.

(Scene switches back to old Ruby)

Little girl, Little boy:

Wow, it sounds like you had a really hard time when you were a little girl, Ruby.

Adult Ruby:

Yes I did. There were so many tough times but I was able to work through them. Most importantly, I had the freedom to go to any school no matter whether it was for white or black children.

Education is very important. I am glad the laws changed, so that I had the freedom and ability to get an education at a better school.

Little girl, Little boy:

Thank you, Ruby. What you did back then makes our schools today better places for everyone. Maybe you didn't know it then, But you were very, very brave.

(Ruby, Ruby's mother, and the little girl walk off together.)